A

Confutation of Atheism

FROM THE

Structure and Origin of Human Bodies.

PART I. 2.

A

SERMON

Preached at

Saint *Martin's in the Fields,*

May 2. 1692.

Being the *Third* of the Lecture Founded by the Honourable *ROBERT BOYLE*, Esquire.

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The Third Edition.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. H.* for *Henry Mortlock*, at the *Phœnix*,
in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1693.

Imprimatur.

Geo. Royse, R. R^mo in Christo Patri ac D^no D^no *Johanni* Archiep. *Cantuar.* à Sacris Domest.

May 7.
1692.

Acts XVII. 27.

That they ſhould ſeek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him; though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we Live, and Move, and have our Being.

I Have ſaid enough in my laſt, to ſhew the fitneſs and pertinency of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe to the perſons he addreſs'd to: whereby it ſufficiently appears that he was no *Babler*, as ſome of the *Athenian* Rabble reproached him; not a σπερμολόγος, a buſie prating Fellow; as in another language they ſay *Sermones ſerere*, and *Rumores ſerere* in a like mode of Expreſſion; that he did not talk at random, but was throughly acquainted with the ſeveral humors and opinions of his Auditors. And as *Moſes was learned in all the Wiſdom of the Ægyptians*, ſo it is manifeſt from this Chapter alone, if nothing elſe had been now extant, that St. *Paul* was a great Maſter in all the Learning of the *Greeks*. One thing further I ſhall obſerve from the words of the Text, before I enter upon the Subject which I propoſed; that it requires *ſome* Induſtry and Conſideration to find out the Being of God; we muſt *ſeek the Lord*, and *feel after him*, before we can *find* him

Plautus. Virgil. Livius.

him by the Light of Nature. The ſearch indeed is not very tedious, nor difficult; *He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our Being.* The Conſideration of our Mind and Underſtanding, which is an incorporeal Subſtance independent from Matter; and the contemplation of our own Bodies, which have all the ſtamps and characters of excellent Contrivance; theſe alone, though we look upon nothing abroad, do very eaſily and proximately guide us to the wiſe Author of all things. But however, as we ſee from our Text, *ſome* Thoughts and Meditation are neceſſary to it; and a man may poſſibly be ſo ſtupid, or wilfully ignorant or perverſe, as not to have *God in all his thoughts*, or to *ſay in his heart, There is none.* And this being obſerved, we have an effectual anſwer to that Cavil of the Atheiſts; who make it an objection againſt the Being of God, that they do not diſcover him without any Application, in ſpite of their corrupt Wills and debauch'd Underſtandings. If, ſay they, ſuch a God as we are told of, had created and formed us, ſurely he would have left upon our Minds a native and indeleble Inſcription of Himſelf, whereby we muſt needs have *felt* him, even without *ſeeking*, and believed in him whether we would or no. So that theſe Atheiſts being conſcious to themſelves, that they are void of ſuch Belief, which (they ſay) if God was, would actually

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and neceſſarily be in them, do bring their own wicked Doubting and Denying of God, as Evidence againſt his Exiſtence, and make their very Infidelity an argument for it ſelf. To which we reply, That God hath endu'd Mankind with Powers and Abilities, which we call natural Light, and Reaſon, and common Senſe; by the due uſe of which we cannot miſs of the Diſcovery of his Being; and this is ſufficient. But as to any other original Notion and Propoſition, that *God is* actually imprinted on us, antecedently to all uſe of our Faculties, we may affirm againſt the Atheiſts, that the abſence of ſuch a Notion doth not give the leaſt preſumption againſt the truth of Religion; becauſe though God be ſuppoſed to be, yet that Notion diſtinct from our Faculties would not be requiſite; nor is it pretended to by Religion. *Firſt*, it would not be requiſite; becauſe, without any ſuch primitive Impreſſion, we can eaſily attain to the knowledge of the Deity by the ſole uſe of our Natural Reaſon. And again, ſuch an Impreſſion would have render'd the Belief of a God irreſiſtible and neceſſary, and thereby have bereaved it of all that is good and acceptable in it. For as by taking away the Freedom of Human Will, and making us meer Machins under fatal Ties and Impulſes, it would deſtroy the very nature of Moral Vertue; ſo likewiſe as to Faith, there would be nothing worthy of praiſe

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and recompence in it, if there were left no poſſibility of Doubting or Denying. And *ſecondly*, ſuch a radical Truth, that *God is*, ſpringing up together with the Eſſence of the Soul, and previous to all other Thoughts, is not pretended to by Religion. No ſuch thing, that I know of, is affirmed or ſuggeſted by the Scriptures. There are ſeveral Topics there uſed againſt the Atheiſm and Idolatry of the Heathens; ſuch as the viſible marks of Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs in the Works of the Creation, the vital Union of Souls with Matter, and the admirable Structure of animate Bodies, and the like. But if our Apoſtle had aſſerted ſuch an anticipating Principle engraven upon our Souls before all Exerciſe of Reaſon; what did he talk of *ſeeking the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him*: ſeeing that if the knowledge of him was in that manner innate and perpetual, there would be no occaſion of *ſeeking*, nor any *hap* or hazard in the finding. Such an Inſcription would be ſelf-evident without any Ratiocination or Study, and could not fail conſtantly to exert its Energy in their Minds. What did he talk of the *Unknown God*, and *ignorantly worſhipping*; when if ſuch an Original Signature were always inherent in their hearts; God could not be unknown to, or ignorantly worſhipp'd by any? That primary Propoſition would have been clear, and diſtinct, and efficacious,

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and univerſal in the minds of Men. S. *Paul* therefore, it appears, had no apprehenſion of ſuch a Firſt Notion; nor made uſe of it for an argument; which (ſeeing that whoſoever hath it, muſt needs know that he hath it) if it be not believed, before by the Adverſary, is falſe; and if it be believed, is ſuperfluous; and is of ſo frail and brittle a texture, that whereas other arguments are not anſwered by bare denying without contrary Proof, the meer doubting and disbelieving of this muſt be granted to be *ipſo facto* the breaking and confuting of it. Thus much therefore we have proved againſt the Atheiſt; that ſuch an original irreſiſtible Notion is neither requiſite upon ſuppoſition of a Deity, nor is pretended to by Religion; ſo that neither the Abſence of it is any argument againſt the Being of God, nor a ſuppoſed falſe Aſſertion of it an objection againſt the Scripture. 'Tis enough that all are furniſh'd with ſuch Natural Powers and Capacities; that if they ſeriouſly reflect, if they *ſeek the Lord* with meditation and ſtudy, they cannot fail of *finding* and diſcovering him: whereby God is not *left without witneſs*, but the Atheiſt *without excuſe*. And now I haſte to the ſecond Propoſition deduced from the Text, and the argument of my preſent Diſcourſe, That the organical Structure of humane Bodies whereby they are fitted to live, and move, and be vitally informed by the Soul, is unqueſtionably

queſtionably the workmanſhip of a moſt wiſe, and powerfull and beneficent Maker.

Firſt, 'Tis allowed and acknowledged by all parties, that the bodies of Men and other Animals are excellently well fitted for Life, and Motion, and Senſation; and the ſeveral parts of them well adapted and accommodated to their particular Functions. The Eye is very proper and meet for ſeeing, the Tongue for taſting and ſpeaking, the Hand for holding and lifting, and ten thouſand Operations beſide: and ſo for the inward Parts; the Lungs are ſuitable for Reſpiration, the Stomach for Concoction, the Lacteous Veſſels for the Reception of the Chyle, the Heart for the Diſtribution of the Blood to all the parts of the Body. This is matter of Fact, and beyond all diſpute; and in effect is no more than to ſay, that *Animals are Animals*; for if they were depriv'd of theſe Qualifications, they could not be ſo. This therefore is not the matter in Queſtion between us and the Atheiſts: But the Controverſie is here. We, when we conſider ſo many conſtituent parts in the Bodies of Men, all admirably compacted into ſo noble an Engine; in each of the very Fingers, for example, there are Bones, and Griſtles, and Ligaments, and Membranes, and Muſcles, and Tendons, and Nerves, and Arteries, and Veins, and Skin, and Cuticle, and Nail; together

ther with Marrow, and Fat, and Blood, and other Nutritious Juices; and all thoſe ſolid Parts of a determinate Size, and Figure, and Texture, and Situation; and each of them made up of Myriads of little Fibres and Filaments, not diſcoverable by the naked Eye: I ſay, when we conſider how innumerable parts muſt conſtitute ſo ſmall a member, as the Finger, we cannot look upon *it* or the whole Body, wherein appears ſo much Fitneſs and Uſe, and Subſervency to infinite Functions, any otherwiſe than as the effect of Contrivance and Skill, and conſequently the Workmanſhip of a moſt Intelligent and Beneficent Being. And though now the Propagation of Mankind is in a ſettled method of Nature, the inſtrument of God: yet we affirm that its firſt Production was by the immediate Power of the Almighty Author of Nature: and that all ſucceeding Generations of Men are the Progeny of one primitive Couple. This is a Religious Man's account of the Frame and Origination of himſelf. Now the Atheiſts agree with us, as to the Fitneſs of Man's Body and its ſeveral Parts to their various Operations and Functions (for that is viſible and paſt all contradiction) but they vehemently impugn, and horribly dread the Thought, That this Uſefulneſs of the Parts and the Whole ſhould firſt ariſe from Wiſdom and Deſign. So that here will be the point in debate, and the

ſubject of our preſent Undertaking; Whether this acknowledged Fitneſs of Human Bodies muſt be attributed, as we ſay, to a wiſe and good God; or, as the Atheiſts averr, to dead ſenſeleſs Matter. They have contrived ſeveral tricks and *methods of Deceit*, one repugnant to another, to evade (if poſſible) this moſt cogent Proof of a Deity; All which I will propoſe and refute: and I hope to make it appear, that here, as indeed every where, but here certainly, in the great Dramatick Poem of Nature, is, *dignus Deo vindice Nodus*, a neceſſity of introducing a God.

Μεθοδείας τῆς πλάνης. Eph. 4. 14.

And firſt, I will anſwer what Exceptions they can have againſt Our account: and ſecondly, I will confute all the Reaſons and Explications they can give of their Own.

1. *Firſt*, I will anſwer what Exceptions they can have againſt Our account of the Production of Mankind. And they may object, That the Body it ſelf, though pretty good in its Kind and upon their *Hypotheſis*, nevertheleſs doth not look like the Workmanſhip of ſo great a Maſter, as is pretended by Us; that infinite Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Power, would have beſtowed upon us more Senſes than five, or at leaſt theſe five in a much higher Perfection; that we could never have come out of the Hands of the Almighty, ſo ſubject to numerous Diſeaſes, ſo obnoxious to violent Deaths; and at beſt, of ſuch

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a ſhort and tranſitory Life. They can no more aſcribe ſo ſorry an Effect to an Omniſcient Cauſe, than ſome ordinary piece of Clock-work with a very few motions and uſes, and thoſe continually out of order, and quickly at an end, to the beſt Artiſt of the Age. But to this we reply: *Firſt*, as to the five Senſes, it would be raſh indeed to affirm, That God, though he had pleaſed, could not have endued us with more. But thus much we may averr, That though the power of God be infinite and perfect, yet the Capacities of Matter are within limits and bounds. Why then doth the Atheiſt ſuſpect that there may poſſibly be any more ways of Senſation than what we have already? Hath he an Idea, or Notion, or Diſcovery of any more? So far from that, that he cannot make any addition or progreſs in thoſe very Senſes he hath, further than they themſelves have informed him. He cannot imagine one new Colour, or Taſt, or Smell, beſide thoſe that have actually fallen under his reſpective Senſes. Much leſs can he that is deſtitute of an entire Senſe, have any Idea or Repreſentation of it; as one that is born Deaf hath no Notion of Sounds; or Blind, of Colours and Light. If then the Atheiſt can have no Imagination of more Senſes than five, why doth he ſuppoſe that a Body is capable of more? If we had double or triple as many, there might ſtill be

the ſame ſuſpicion for a greater number without end; and therefore in both caſes 'tis equally unreaſonable and groundleſs. *Secondly*, we affirm, that our Senſes have that degree of Perfection which is moſt fit and ſuitable to our Eſtate and Condition. If the *Eye* were ſo peircing, as to deſcry even opake and little Objects an hundred Leagues off, it would do us little ſervice; it would be terminated by neighbouring Hills and Woods, or in the largeſt and eveneſt plain by the very convexity of the Earth, unleſs we could always inhabit the tops of Mountains and Cliffs, or had Wings too to fly aloft, when we had a mind to take a Proſpect. And if Mankind had had Wings (as perhaps ſome extravagant Atheiſt may think us deficient in that) all the World muſt have conſented to clip them; or elſe Human Race had been extinct before this time, nothing upon that ſuppoſition being ſafe from Murder and Rapine. Or if the *Eye* were ſo acute, as to rival the fineſt Microſcopes, and to diſcern the ſmalleſt Hair upon the leg of a Gnat, it would be a curſe and not a bleſſing to us; it would make all things appear rugged and deformed; the moſt finely poliſhed Chryſtal would be uneven and rough: The ſight of our own ſelves would affright us: The ſmootheſt Skin would be beſet all over with ragged Scales, and briſtly Hairs. And beſide, we could not ſee at one view

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above what is now the ſpace of an Inch, and it would take a conſiderable time to ſurvey the then mountainous bulk of our own Bodies. Such a Faculty of ſight ſo diſproportion'd to our other Senſes and to the Objects about us would be very little better than Blindneſs it ſelf. And again, God hath furniſhed us with Invention and Induſtry, ſo that by optical Glaſſes we can more than ſupply that imaginary defect of our own Eyes, and diſcover more remote and minute Bodies with that aſſiſtance than perhaps the moſt whimſical Atheiſt would deſire to do without it. So likewiſe if our Senſe of *Hearing* were exalted proportionably to the former, what a miſerable condition would Mankind be in? What whiſper could be low enough, but many would over-hear it? What Affairs, that moſt require it, could be tranſacted with ſecrecy? and whither could we retire from perpetual humming and buzzing? every breath of Wind would incommode and diſturb us: we ſhould have no quiet or ſleep in the ſilenteſt nights and moſt ſolitary places; and we muſt inevitably be ſtricken Deaf or Dead with the noiſe of a clap of Thunder. And the like inconveniences would follow, if the Senſe of *Feeling* was advanced to ſuch a degree, as the Atheiſt requires. How could we ſuſtain the preſſure of our very Cloaths in ſuch a condition; much leſs carry burthens and provide for

for conveniences of Life? We could not bear the aſſault of an Inſect, or a Feather, or a puff of Air without pain. There are examples now of wounded perſons, that have roared for anguiſh and torment at the diſcharge of Ordnance, though at a very great diſtance; what inſupportable torture then ſhould we be under upon a like concuſſion in the Air, when all the whole Body would have the tenderneſs of a Wound? In a word, all the Changes and Emendations that the Atheiſts would make in our Senſes, are ſo far from being Improvements, that they would prove the utter Ruin and Extirpation of Mankind.

But perhaps they may have better ſucceſs in their complaints about the Diſtempers of the Body and the Shortneſs of Life. We do not wonder indeed, that the Atheiſt ſhould lay a mighty ſtreſs upon this Objection. For to a man that places all his Happineſs in the Indolency and Pleaſure of the Body, what can be more terrible than Pain or a Fit of Sickneſs? nothing but *Death* alone, the moſt dreadfull thing in the world. When an Atheiſt reflects upon Death, his very Hope is Deſpair; and 'tis the crown and top of his Wiſhes, that it may prove his utter Diſſolution and Deſtruction. No queſtion if an Atheiſt had had the making of himſelf, he would have framed a Conſtitution that could have kept pace

pace with his insatiable Lust, been invincible by Gluttony and Intemperance, and have held out vigorous a thousand years in a perpetual Debauch. But we answer; *First*, in the words of St. *Paul*: *Nay, but, O Man, who art thou, that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* We adore and magnifie his most holy Name for his undeserved Mercy towards us, that he made us the Chief of the visible Creation; and freely acquit his Goodness from any imputation of Unkindness, that he has placed us no Higher. *Secondly*, Religion gives us a very good account of the present Infirmity of our Bodies. Man at his first Origin was a Vessel of Honour, when he came first out of the Hands of the Potter; endued with all imaginable Perfections of the Animal Nature; till by Disobedience and Sin, Diseases and Death came first into the World. *Thirdly*, The Distempers of the Body are not so formidable to a Religious Man, as they are to an Atheist: He hath a quite different judgment and apprehension about them: he is willing to believe, that our present condition is better for us in the Issue, than that uninterrupted Health and Security, that the Atheist desires; which would strongly tempt us to forget God and the concerns of a better Life. Whereas now he receives a Fit of Sickness, as the παιδεία τοῦ πατρὸς, the

Rom 9.20.

the kind Chaſtiſement and Diſcipline of his Heavenly Father, to wean his Affections from the World, where he is but as on a Journey; and to fix his thoughts and deſires on things above, where his Country and his Dwelling is: that where he hath placed his *Treaſure* and Concerns, *there his heart may be alſo. Fourthly*, Moſt of the Diſtempers that are incident to us are of our own making, the effects of abuſed Plenty, and Luxury, and muſt not be charged upon our Maker; who notwithſtanding out of the Riches of his Compaſſion hath provided for us ſtore of excellent Medicines, to alleviate in a great meaſure thoſe very Evils which we bring upon our ſelves. And now we are come to the laſt objection of the Atheiſt, That Life is too ſhort. Alas for him, what pity 'tis that he cannot wallow immortally in his ſenſual Pleaſures! If his Life were many whole Ages longer than it is, he would ſtill make the ſame Complaint, *Brevis eſt hic fructus homullis.* For Eterniey, and that's the thing he trembles at, is every whit as long after a thouſand years as after fifty. But Religion gives us a better proſpect and makes us look beyond the gloomy Regions of Death with Comfort and Delight: *When this corruptible ſhall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.* We are ſo far from repining at God, that he hath not extended the period of our Lives to the

Lucret. l. 3.

the Longævity of the Antediluvians; that we give him thanks for contracting the Days of our Trial, and receiving us more maturely into thoſe Everlaſting Habitations above, that he hath prepared for us.

And now that I have anſwer'd all the Atheiſt's Exceptions againſt Our account of the Production of Mankind, I come in the next place to examine all the Reaſons and Explications they can give of their own.

The Atheiſts upon this occaſion are divided into Sects, and (which is the mark and character of Error) are at variance and repugnancy with each other and with themſelves. *Some* of them will have Mankind to have been thus from all Eternity. But the reſt do not approve of any infinite Succeſſions, but are poſitive for a beginning; and they alſo are ſubdivided into three Parties: the *firſt* aſcribe the Origin of Men to the Influence of the Stars upon ſome extraordinary Conjunction or Aſpect: Others again reject all Aſtrology; and *ſome* of theſe mechanically produce Mankind at the very firſt Experiment by the action of the Sun upon duly prepared Matter: but *others* are rather of opinion, that after infinite blundering and miſcarrying our Bodies at laſt happen'd and jump'd into this Figure by meer Chance and Accident. There's no Atheiſt

in the World, that reaſons about his Infidelity (which God knows moſt of them never do) but he takes one of theſe *four* Methods. I will refute them every one in the ſame order that I have named them: the two former in the preſent Diſcourſe, reſerving the others for another occaſion.

1. And *Firſt*, the Opinion of thoſe Atheiſts that will have Mankind and other Animals to have ſubſiſted thus eternally in infinite Generations already paſt, will be found to be flat Non-ſence and Contradiction to it ſelf, and repugnant alſo to matter of Fact. *Firſt*, it is contradiction to it ſelf. Infinite Generations of Men (they ſay) are already paſt and gone: but whatſoever is now paſt, was once actually preſent; ſo that each of thoſe Infinite Generations was once in its turn actually preſent: therefore all except One Generation were once future and not in being, which deſtroys the very ſuppoſition: For either that One Generation muſt it ſelf have been Infinite, which is Nonſence; or it was the Finite Beginning of Infinite Generations between it ſelf and us, which is Infinity terminated at both ends, which is Nonſence as before. *Again*, Infinite paſt Generations of Men have been once actually preſent: therefore there may be ſome one Man of them given, that was at infinite diſtance from *us* now: therefore that man's Son likewiſe, ſuppoſe forty years

years younger than his Father, was either at infinite diſtance from us or at finite: if that Son too was at infinite diſtance from us, then one Infinite is longer by forty years than another; which is abſurd: if at finite, then forty years added to finite makes it infinite, which is as abſurd as the other. And *again*, The number of Men that are already dead and gone is infinite, as they ſay: but the number of the Eyes of thoſe Men muſt neceſſarily be twice as much as that of the Men themſelves, and that of the Fingers ten times as much, and that of the Hairs of their Heads thouſands of times. So that we have here one Infinite number twice, ten times, and thouſands of times as great as another, which is contradiction again. Thus we ſee it is impoſſible in it ſelf, that any ſucceſſive duration ſhould be actually and poſitively infinite, or have infinite ſucceſſions already gone and paſt. Neither can theſe Difficulties be applied to the Eternal Duration of God Almighty. For though we cannot comprehend Eternity and Infinity; yet we underſtand what they are *not*. And ſomething, we are ſure, muſt have Exiſted from all Eternity; becauſe all things could nor emerge and ſtart out of Nothing. So that if this præ-exiſtent Eternity is not compatible with a ſucceſſive Duration, as we clearly and diſtinctly perceive that it is not; then it remains, that ſome Be-

ing, though infinitely above our finite comprehenſions, muſt have had an identical, invariable Continuance from all Eternity; which Being is no other than God. For as his Nature is perfect and immutable without the *leaſt ſhadow of change*; ſo his Eternal Duration is permanent and indiviſible, not meaſurable by Time and Motion, nor to be computed by number of ſucceſſive Moments. *One day with the Lord is as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day.*

And *Secondly*, this Opinion of infinite Generations is repugnant likewiſe to matter of Fact. 'Tis a Truth beyond oppoſition, that the univerſal Species of Mankind hath had a gradual increaſe, notwithſtanding what War, and Famine, and Peſtilence, and Floods, and Conflagrations, and the Religious Profeſſion of Celibacy, and other Cauſes, may at certain periods of time have interrupted and retarded it. This is manifeſt from the Hiſtory of the Jewiſh Nation, from the account of the Roman *Cenſus*, and Regiſters of our own Country, where the proportion of Births to Burials is found upon obſervation to be yearly as Fifty to Forty. Now if Mankind do increaſe though never ſo ſlowly, but one Couple ſuppoſe in an Age; 'tis enough to evince the falſhood of Infinite Generations already expired. For though an Atheiſt ſhould contend, that

Vide Obſervations upon the Bills of Mortality.

that there were ten thouſand million couple of Mankind now in being, (that we may allow him multitude enough) 'tis but going back ſo many Ages, and we deſcend to a ſingle Original Pair. And 'tis all one in reſpect of Eternal Duration yet behind, whether we begin the world ſo many millions of Ages ago, or date it from the late *Æra* of about Six Thouſand years. And moreover this recent beginning of the World is further eſtabliſhed from the known Original of Empires and Kingdoms, and the Invention of Arts and Sciences: whereas if infinite Ages of Mankind had already preceded, there could nothing have been left to be invented or improved by the ſucceſsfull induſtry and curioſity of our own. The Circulation of the Blood, and the Weight and Spring of the Air (which is as it were the Vital Pulſe and the great Circulation of Nature, and of more importance in all Phyſiology, than any one Invention ſince the beginning of Science) had never lain hidden ſo many myriads of Generations, and been reſerved for a late happy Diſcovery by two great Luminaries of this Iſland. I know the Atheiſt may endeavour to evade this by ſuppoſing, That though Mankind have been from everlaſting, and have perpetually encreas'd by generation; yet at certain great periods there may be univerſal Deluges, which may *not* wholly extinguiſh Man-

kind (for, they'll ſay, there is not Water enough in Nature for that) but may cover the Earth to ſuch a Height, that none but a few Mountainers may eſcape, enough to continue Humane Race; and yet being illiterate Ruſticks (as Mountainers always are) they can preſerve no Memoirs of former times, nor propagate any Sciences or Arts; and ſo the world muſt needs be thought by Poſterity to have begun at ſuch periods. But to this I anſwer, *Firſt*, That upon this ſuppoſition there muſt have been infinite Deluges already paſt: for if ever this Atheiſt admits of a firſt Deluge, he is in the ſame nooſe that he was. For then he muſt aſſert, That there were infinite generations and an infinite increaſe of Mankind before that firſt Deluge; and then the Earth could not receive them, but the infinite Bodies of Men muſt occupy an infinite Space, and then all the Matter of the Univerſe muſt be humane Body, and other abſurdities that follow it, which are infinite too. But if he ſays, That there have been infinite Deluges heretofore, this is impoſſibility again; for all that I ſaid before againſt the Notion of infinite paſt Generations, is alike applicable to this. *Secondly*, Such Univerſal Deluges (ſeeing the Deity is now excluded) muſt be produced in a natural way: and therefore gradually, and not in an inſtant: and therefore (becauſe the

tops

tops of Mountains, they ſay, are never overflown) the civilized People may eſcape thither out of Villages and Cities; and conſequently, againſt the Atheiſt, Arts, and Sciences, and Hiſtories, may be preſerved, and derived to the ſucceeding World. *Thirdly*, let us imagin the whole Terraqueous Globe with its Atmoſphere about it; What is there here, that can naturally effect an Univerſal Deluge? If you would drown one Country or Continent with Rains and Inundations, you muſt borrow your Vapour and Water from ſome other part of the Globe. You can never overflow all at a time. If the Atmoſphere it ſelf was reduced into Water, (as ſome think it poſſible) it would not make an Orb above 32 foot deep, which would ſoon be ſwallowed up by the cavity of the Sea, and the depreſſed parts of the Earth, and be a very feeble attempt towards an Univerſal Deluge. But then what immenſe Weight is there above, that muſt overcome the expanſive force of the Air, and compreſs it into near the thouſandth part of the room that it now takes up? *We*, that acknowledge a God Almighty, can give an account of one Deluge, by ſaying it was miraculous; but it would be a little ſtrange to ſee an Atheiſt have recourſe to a Miracle; and that not once only, but upon infinite occaſions. But perhaps they may endeavour to prove the poſ-

ſibilty

ſibility of ſuch a natural Deluge, by borrowing an ingenious Notion, and pretending, That the face of Nature may be now quite changed from what it was; and that formerly the whole Collection of Waters might be an orbicular Abyſs, arched over with an exterior Cruſt or Shell of Earth, and that the breaking and fall of this Cruſt might naturally make a Deluge. I'll allow the Atheiſt all the fair play in the world. Let us ſuppoſe the Fall of this imaginary Cruſt. *Firſt*, It ſeems to be impoſſible, but that all the Inhabitants of this Cruſt muſt be daſh'd to pieces in its Ruins. So that this very Notion brings us to the neceſſity of a new production of Men; to evade which it is introduced by the Atheiſt. *Again*, If ſuch a Cruſt naturally fell, then it had in its own conſtitution a tendency towards a Fall; that is, it was more likely and inclinable to fall this thouſand years, ſuppoſe, than the laſt. But if the Cruſt was always gradually nearer and nearer to falling; that plainly evinces, that it had not endured eternally before its Fall. For let them aſſign any imaginable period for its falling, how could it have held out till then (according to the ſuppoſition) the unmeaſurable duration of infinite Ages before? And *again*, ſuch a Cruſt could fall but once; for what Architect can an Atheiſt ſuppoſe, to rebuild a new Arch out of the ruins of the other?

But

But I have ſhewn before that this Atheiſt hath need of infinite Deluges to effect his deſign; and therefore I'll leave him to contrive how to make infinite Cruſts one upon the back of another; and now proceed to examine in the ſecond place, The Aſtrological Explication of the Origin of Men.

2. If you ask one of this Party, what Evidence he is able to produce for the truth of his Art, he may perhaps offer ſome Phyſical Reaſons for a general influence of the Stars upon terreſtrial bodies: but as Aſtrology is conſider'd as a Syſtem of Rules and Propoſitions, he will not pretend to give any reaſon of it *à priori*; but reſolves all that into Tradition from the *Chaldeans* and *Ægyptians*, who firſt learnt it by long obſervation, and tranſmitted it down to Poſterity; and that now it is daily confirmed by Events, which are experienced to anſwer the Predictions. This is all that can be ſaid for Aſtrology as an Art. So that the whole Credibility of this Planetary production of Mankind muſt depend upon Obſervation. But are they able to ſhew among all the Remains of the *Chaldaick* Obſervations for Four hundred and ſeventy thouſand years (as they pretended) any Tradition of ſuch a Production? So far from that, that the *Chaldeans* believed the world and mankind to have been from everlaſting, which opinion I have refuted before. Neither can the *Ægyptian* Wizards with their long Catalogue of Dy-

naſties, and Obſervations for innumerable Years, ſupply the Atheiſts with one inſtance of ſuch a Creation. Where are the fragments of *Petoſiris* and *Necepſo*, that may countenance this Aſſertion? I believe if they had had any example of men born out of the Soil, they would rather have aſcribed it to the fruitfull Mud of the *Nile* (as they did the breeding of Frogs, and Mice, and Monſters) than to the efficacy of Stars. But with the leave of theſe Fortune-tellers, did the Stars do this feat once only, which gave beginning to Human Race? or have they frequently done ſo, and may do it again? If frequently, why is not this Rule deliver'd in *Ptolemy* and *Albumazar*? If once only at the beginning, then how came it to be diſcover'd? Who were there then in the world, to obſerve the Births of thoſe Firſt Men, and calculate their Nativities, as they ſprawl'd out of Ditches? Thoſe Sons of Earth were very wiſe Children if they themſelves knew, that the Stars were their Fathers. Unleſs we are to imagine, that they underſtood the Planets and the Zodiack by inſtinct, and fell to drawing Schemes of their own Horoſcopes, in the ſame Duſt they ſprung out of? For my part I can have no great veneration for *Chaldaick* Antiquity;

So *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. 1. c. 2. Φασὶ πίνυν Αἰγύπτιοι καὶ τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τῶν ὅλων γένεσιν πρώτους τοὺς ἀνθρώπους γενέσθαι καὶ τὴν Αἴγυπτον, διά τε τὴν εὐκρασίαν τῆς χώρας, καὶ διὰ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ Νείλου, &c.

Vitruvius, *lib.* 9. *c.* 4.

Lucret. *lib.* 5.

Ut Babylonica Chaldæum doctrina, &c. Apuleius *de Deo* Socratis: *Seu illa* (*Luna*) *proprio & perpeti fulgore, ut* Chaldæi *arbitrantur, parte luminis compos, parte altera caſſa fulgoris.*

when

when I ſee they could not diſcover in ſo many thouſand years, that the Moon was an opake Body, and received her Light from the Sun. But ſuppoſe their Obſervations had been never ſo accurate, it could add no Authority to modern Aſtrology, which is borrowed from the *Greeks*. 'Tis well known that *Beroſus*, or his Scholars, new modelled and adapted the *Babylonian* Doctrines to the *Grecian* Mythology. The ſuppoſed Influences of *Aries* and *Taurus* for example, have a manifeſt relation to the *Grecian* Stories of the Ram that carried *Phrixus*, and the Bull that carried *Europa*. Now which of theſe is the Copy, and which the Original? Were the Fables taken from the Influences, or the Influences from the Fables? the Poetical Fables more ancient than all Records of Hiſtory; or the Aſtrological Influences, that were not known to the *Greeks* till after *Alexander* the Great? But without queſtion thoſe Fabulous Tales had been many a time told and ſung to lull Children aſleep, before ever *Beroſus* ſet up his Intelligence-Office at *Coos*. And the ſame may be ſaid of all the other Conſtellations. Firſt, Poetry had filled the Skies with Aſteriſms and Hiſtories belonging to them; and then Aſtrology deviſes the feigned Virtues and Influences of each, from ſome property of the Image, or Alluſion to the Story. And the ſame trifling futility appears in their XII Signs of the *Zodiack*, and their mutual Relations and Aſpects. Why

no more Aſpects than diametrically oppoſite, and ſuch as make æquilateral figures? Why are the Maſculine and Feminine, the Fiery and Airy, and Watry and Earthly Signs all placed at ſuch regular diſtances? Were the Virtues of the Stars diſpoſed in that order and rank, on purpoſe only to make a pretty Diagram upon Paper? But the Atheiſtical Aſtrologer is doubly preſſed with this abſurdity. For if there was no Counſel at the making of the world, how came the Aſteriſms of the ſame nature and energies to be ſo harmoniouſly placed at regular intervals? And how could all the Stars of one Aſteriſm agree and conſpire together to conſtitute an Univerſal? Why does not every ſingle Star ſhed a ſeparate influence; and have Aſpects with other Stars of their own Conſtellation? But what need there many words? As if the late Diſcoveries of the Celeſtial Bodies had not plainly detected the impoſture of Aſtrology? The Planet *Saturn* is found to have a great Ring that encircles him, and three leſſer Planets that move about him, as the Moon doth about the Earth: and *Jupiter* hath four *Satellites*, which by their Interpoſition between him and us make ſome hundreds of Eclipſes every year. Now the whole Tribe of Aſtrologers, that never dream'd of theſe Planets have always declared, that when *Jupiter* and *Saturn* come about again to any given Point, they exert (conſider'd ſingly by themſelves)

ſelves) the ſame Influence as before. But 'tis now manifeſt, that when either of them return to the ſame point; the Planets about them, that muſt make up an united Influence with them, have a different ſituation in reſpect of us and each other, from what they had the time before: and conſequently the joint Influence muſt be perpetually varied, and never be reducible to any Rules and Obſervations. Or if the Influences be conveyed hither diſtinct, yet ſometimes ſome of the Little Planets will eclipſe the Great one at any given point; and therefore intercept and obſtruct the Influence. I cannot now inſiſt on many other Arguments deducible from the late Improvements of Aſtronomy; For if the Earth be not the Centre of the Planetary Motions, what muſt become then of the preſent Aſtrology, which is wholly adapted to that vulgar *Hypotheſis*? And yet nevertheleſs, when they lay under ſuch wretched miſtakes for many Myriads of Years, if we are willing to believe them; they would all along, as now, appeal to Experience and Event for the confirmation of their Doctrins. That's the invincible Demonſtration of the Verity of the Science: And indeed as to their Predictions, I think our Aſtrologers may aſſume to themſelves that infallible Oracle of *Tireſias*,

O Laertiade, quicquid dico, aut erit, aut non.

There's

There's but a true and a falſe in any telling of Fortune; and a man that never hits on the right ſide, cannot be called a bad Gueſſer, but muſt miſs out of deſign, and be notably skilfull at lighting on the wrong. And were there not formerly as great pretentions to it from the ſuperſtitious Obſervation of the Entrails of Cows, of the flying of Vulturs, and the pecking of Chickens? Nay, the old *Augurs* and *Southſayers* had better reaſon to profeſs the Art of Divining, than the modern Aſtrological Atheiſt: for They ſuppoſed there were ſome *Dæmons*, that directed the Indications. So likewiſe the *Chaldean* and *Ægyptian* Aſtrologers were much more excuſable than He. It was the Religion of their Countries to worſhip the Stars, as we know from unqueſtionable Authority. They believed them Intelligent Beings, and no other than very Gods; and therefore had ſome Reaſon to ſuſpect, that they might govern Human Affairs. The Influence of the Stars was in their apprehenſions no leſs than Divine Power. But an Atheiſt, that believes the Planets to be dark, ſolid and ſenſleſs Bodies, like the brute Earth he treads on; and the Fixt Stars and the Sun to be inanimate Balls of Fire; what Reaſons can He advance for the Credit of ſuch Influences? He acknowledgeth nothing beſides Matter and Motion; ſo that all that he can con-

Maimonides More Nevochim *De Zabiis & Chaldæis.* Plato *in* Cratylo Diodorus, *lib.* 1. *c.* 2. Euſebiu *Demonſt. Evangel. lib.* 1. *c.* 6. Φοίνικας τοιγαρῶν καὶ Αἰγυπτίους πρώτους ἁπάντων κατέχει λόγος ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ ἀστέρας θεοὺς ἀποφῆναι.

conceive to be tranſmitted hither from the Stars, muſt needs be perform'd either by Mechaniſm or Accident; either of which is wholly unaccountable, and the latter irreconcilable to any Art or Syſtem of Science. But if both were allowed the Atheiſt; yet as to any production of Mankind, they will be again refuted in my following Diſcourſe. I can preſerve a due eſteem for ſome great Men of the laſt Age, before the Mechanical Philoſophy was revived, though they were too much addicted to this nugatory Art. When Occult Quality, and Sympathy and Antipathy were admitted for ſatisfactory Explications of things, even wiſe and vertuous Men might ſwallow down any Opinion that was countenanced by Antiquity. But at this time of day, when all the general powers and capacities of Matter are ſo clearly underſtood; he muſt be very ridiculous himſelf, that doth not deride and explode the antiquated Folly. But we may ſee the miſerable Shifts that ſome men are put to; when that which was firſt founded upon, and afterward ſupported by *Idolatry*, is now become the tottering Sanctuary of *Atheiſm*. If the Stars be no Deities, Aſtrology is groundleſs: and if the Stars be Deities, why is the Aſtrologer an Atheiſt? He may eaſily be no Chriſtian; and 'tis difficult indeed to be both at once: becauſe, as I have ſaid before, Idolatry is at the bottom; and by ſubmitting Human Acti-

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ons and Inclinations to the Influence of the Stars, they deſtroy the very Eſſence of Moral Virtue and the Efficacy of Divine Grace: and therefore Aſtrology was juſtly condemn'd by the Ancient Fathers and Chriſtian Emperours. An Aſtrologer, I ſay, may very eaſily be no Chriſtian; he may be an Idolater or a Pagan: but I could hardly think Aſtrology to be compatible with rank Atheiſm; if I could ſuppoſe any great gifts of Nature to be, where either do reſide. But let him be what he will, he is not able to do much hurt by his Reaſons and Example. For Religion it ſelf, according to his Principles, is derived from the Stars. And he owns, 'tis not any juſt Exceptions he hath taken againſt Chriſtianity, but 'tis his Deſtiny and Fate; 'tis *Saturn* in the Ninth Houſe, and not Judgment and Deliberation, that made him an Atheiſt.

Concil. Laod. *Can.* 36. Conc. 6. in Trul. lo. *Can* 61. Cod. Juſt. *lib.* 9. *tit.* 18. Cod Theodoſ. *l.* 9. *tit.* 16. Βασιλικῶν *lib.* 60. *tit.* 39.

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